



DEFENCE

OF THE

RESOLUTION FOR OMITTING

MR. PANIZZI'S BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

FROM THE

CATALOGUE OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

Mr. Panizzi's Letter to His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, relative to the new Catalogue of the Royal Society, has been so ably answered by the Council, that it would be superfluous to enter into the general topics which it embraces; but as there is one part of it which may yet lead to an erroneous impression, a few additional remarks upon the subject seem still to be requisite.

When Mr. Panizzi, with the assistance of Mr. Robertson, had collected the titles of the books in the library of the Royal Society, he had overcome the most laborious part of his task; and there can be little doubt, that, if he would have satisfied himself with the careful arrangement of these materials, he would have laid the foundation of an useful catalogue. But there is a doubt (and a very considerable one) as to the value and accuracy of the notes and remarks, which, from his anxiety to distinguish this Catalogue, Mr. Panizzi was induced, occasionally, to add to the articles which it contained. In support of this opinion, the following remarks are, therefore, submitted to the Fellows of the Royal Society, by a *Member of the Catalogue-Committee*; who thinks it due to those with whom he has been appointed to act, that the real state of the case should be properly explained.

Mr. Panizzi is evidently hurt that this part of his labours, on which he seems greatly to pride himself, has not been so highly

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estimated as he expected. Now there is no wish to give unnecessary pain; but as he has challenged the inquiry, he has left no choice but the admission of his claim, or a justification of the committee; which latter alternative unfortunately cannot be realised but at his expense. The justification, however, need not extend to any great length: for Mr. Panizzi has at page 31 of his Letter collected for himself certain instances which he considers to be characteristic of his work; and as it is scarcely to be conceived that he should be so completely wanting to his own reputation, as not to have selected those which make most for the strength of his cause, he must admit that every advantage is given him, when issue is joined on these very points, and the discussion confined to them alone.

Mr. Panizzi rests upon the four following instances of the value and importance of his bibliographical notes: each of these cases will therefore be examined in the order in which he has arranged them.

1st. He says:—

To the entry ‘*Elémens de Géométrie*,’ said to be by Louis Duke of Bourgogne, printed at Paris in 1729, 8°. I added the following note: ‘This work is generally supposed to be by Malezieu, mathematical teacher to the Duke, who wrote out the lessons which he received. The publishers, in the dedication, allude to the fact that Malezieu possessed a copy of the book in the hand-writing of the Duke of Bourgogne.’

The connection of Malezieu with this work affords a curious anecdote, but if introduced in this place, it ought to have been stated with more precision. The allusion, in the dedication, to the manuscript copy—*valeat quantum valere potest*—certainly favours the title of the Duke to the authorship, and therefore might have suggested the propriety of further inquiry on this head, for the satisfaction of the reader, if not for the purpose of ascertaining the truth. The *Biographie Universelle*, in the life of Malezieu, assigns the work unconditionally to him; but with what exactness, may be seen from the original statement of Fontenelle in his Eloge of that academician. It is there said “*Parmi tous les Elémens de Géométrie, qui avoient paru jusque-là, il choisit ceux de M. Arnaud, comme les plus clairs, & les mieux digérés, pour en faire le fond des leçons qu’il donneroit à M. le Duc de Bourgogne. Seulement il fit à cet ouvrage quelques additions et quelques retranchemens. Il remarqua bientôt que le jeune Prince, qui surmontoit avec une extrême vivacité les difficultés d’une étude si épineuse, tomboit*

“ aussi quelquefois dans l’inconvénient de vouloir passer à coté,
 “ quand il ne les emportait pas d’abord. Pour le fixer davantage,
 “ il lui proposa d’écrire de sa main, au commencement d’une leçon,
 “ ce qui lui avoit été enseigné la veille. Toutes ces leçons écrites
 “ par le Prince pendant le cours de quatre ans, et précieusement
 “ rassemblées, ont fait un corps, que M. Boissière, bibliothécaire
 “ de M. le Duc du Maine, fit imprimer en 1715, sous le titre d’Elé-
 “ mens de Géométrie de M. le Duc de Bourgogne. L’Editeur les
 “ dédie au Prince même, qui en est l’auteur, et n’oublie pas tout ce
 “ qui est du au scavant maitre de Géométrie. Il y a à la fin du livre
 “ quelques problèmes, qui n’appartiennent point à des Elémens, ré-
 “ solus par la méthode analytique, et qui, selon toutes les appa-
 “ rences, sont de M. de Malezieu.”

From this statement it is clear that there is no room for *supposi-*
tion, either general or particular, excepting for the analytical pro-
 blems at the end of the volume, which are distinct from the body of
 the work ; but, on the contrary, that the share which belongs to each
 individual is distinctly described. Malezieu, it appears, drew up
 no Elements of Geometry, but used Arnaud’s as his text-book, “ only
 “ making some additions and omissions” to accommodate them better
 to the study of his pupil ; an expression which conveys the idea of
 these alterations not having been extensive. The Duke had every
 day to analyse and draw up an account of what he had acquired on
 the day before. That in forming these analyses he must have been
 guided by what he had previously learned through the means of his
 tutor, is not denied ; but the combinations may have been in many
 instances his own : and, at all events, the language which he used
 must have been so, or the practice, enjoined to him, could not have
 been effective. Fontenelle gives not the slightest intimation of any
 corrections introduced by Malezieu into the manuscript ; and the
 Duke (whom he expressly speaks of as the author of the volume,)
 ought not, therefore, by an unqualified surmise, to be deprived of
 honour which is justly due to him.

2. Mr. Panizzi goes on to say :—

To the ‘ Mémoires ’ of Charnières on the observations of the lon-
 gitude, I added this note : ‘ All the author’s additions and corrections
 ‘ carefully put in by J. B.’ This note is on the title-page of this copy,
 and the volume is interspersed with alterations in manuscript. I
 suppose J. B. to mean James Bradley.

This conjecture is one, on which Mr. Panizzi seems to set consi-
 derable value, for he returns to it at the bottom of the page, and says,

“ The author’s additions, if put in by Bradley, are of course of much more value than if written by any other J. B.”

That Dr. Bradley was not in the habit of writing, in this manner, on his books, is a fact that could only be accidentally known to any one ; and Mr. Panizzi could not be called upon to be acquainted with it. But he was called upon to have paused before he introduced such a note as this into a book, which was to go out to the world under the sanction of the Royal Society. Bradley’s handwriting is very remarkable, and it will be seen immediately that Mr. Panizzi did not take the very obvious precaution of comparing it with what is written in this volume. There could have been no difficulty in doing so ; for there are papers of Bradley in the British Museum ; and his signature (at least) might have been readily examined at the Royal Society. Under these circumstances there was nothing to rest upon but the initials ; and they might as well have belonged to Ismael Bullialdus, John Blagrove, Jacobus Bartschius, John Bainbridge, or “ any other J. B.” De Charnières was, indeed, an officer of the navy, in the service of Louis the Fifteenth ; and to those, who might be acquainted with this fact, the impossibility of any of the particular interpretations which have been mentioned would be immediately obvious. But the *impossibility* is equally applicable to the supposition of the letters referring to James Bradley. For, the greater or less time which may elapse after the period of a man’s decease, makes no difference in the objection to his having revived as a commentator ; and the fact is, that Dr. Bradley died five years before the *Mémoire* was published by De Charnières*. But what will be said, when it is further stated, that the J. B. of the title-page has dropped his incognito at the end of this very volume ; and that, if Mr. Panizzi had looked so far he would have found the insertion of the notes claimed specifically in that place by “ J. Bevis,” whose handwriting has not the smallest resemblance to that of James Bradley ? The one is small and remarkably neat, the other is large and rather awkwardly formed. It may be further stated that there are no other alterations in the book than the “ corrections and additions” pointed out by the author himself at the end of the volume.

3. Mr. Panizzi’s next instance is as follows :—

To the ‘ *Liber novem judicum in judiciis astrorum*,’ I appended a note as follows : ‘ Panzer, v. 398, 489, gives the name Meschella and

* It is only a single *Mémoire* of De Charnières, not a collection of “ *Mémoires*” by Charnières, as Mr. Panizzi describes it.

‘ Ptolomæus incorrectly [instead of Mesehella and Phtolomeus] and
 ‘ also substitutes *huius* for *istius*. The date which, he says, in the
 ‘ title is 1508, is M.D.viii. in the volume before me; and so it is at
 ‘ the end.’

The first great use of a catalogue is to enable any one to ascertain what books are contained in a particular library; and if by these means he can find what he wants, there seems to be little profit in telling him (when he may have the work itself before him) that he would have been led into error, if he had trusted to the printed account of it. To mark all the variations, in this manner, which are to be found in bibliographical compilations, would swell a catalogue beyond all reasonable limits, and to very little purpose. And it is not obvious what advantage, in the present instance, could accrue to the student from being informed that Panzer had mistaken viiii for viii, *istius* for *huius*, or committed the error of spelling the Latinised name of Ptolemy in a less barbarous manner than he found it in the title-page of the work under his consideration. Such a notice might be useful for a new edition of Panzer; but is evidently misplaced where it is introduced by Mr. Panizzi. It may be remarked likewise that the corrections themselves require to be corrected. The reference to Panzer’s *fifth* volume cannot be right, for that part of his work treats of books printed in the fifteenth century. The *Liber novem judicum* is noticed in the *eighth* volume, where it will be found, in accordance with Mr. Panizzi’s misapplied numbers, at page 398, Art. 489; and it may be there seen that Panzer, though guilty of having written “Meschella,” is more attentive to the etymology of the other name than to introduce an *o* into the penultimate syllable of it. He prints it also without a diphthong (Ptolomæus), and not as Mr. Panizzi has quoted it. The whole note, indeed, is full of mistakes, for it is not Phtolomeus, in the *Liber novem*, as Mr. Panizzi has again incorrectly quoted, but Ptholomeus. These minute criticisms might seem, in any other case, unworthy of notice; but Mr. Panizzi himself has rendered them of ephemeral importance in the present view of the case, by laying so much stress on his own presumed accuracy in such matters.

4. Mr. Panizzi in the last instance says:—

To the title of one of the two copies of Dee’s *Monas Hieroglyphica*, printed at Antwerp in 1664, 4^o, a note is appended in these words: ‘ On the fly-leaf of this copy occurs the following note:
 ‘ Mr. William Lilly (the astrologer) told me that *Monas Hieroglyphica* Δ was made by a friar in Germany, who could have made it

‘ knowne to J. Dee, who did not understand it, and that Kelly, perhaps, poisoned the friar ; for he did not live long after 1673.’ The hand in which this note is written is not known.

The account which Smith, in his life of Dee, gives of this book, affords very little reason for attaching much value either to the work itself or to the particulars, here alluded to, concerning it. And, independent of the ænigmatical Δ , there is some difficulty in guessing at the intention (it would be useless to look for the *meaning*) of the note, which it is here intended to preserve. Dee’s answer to all objections, made to his *Monas Hieroglyphica*, is said to have been, that the readers “ non omnino intellexerint,” and he appears to have greatly prided himself on the knowledge of what it contained. What is then to be understood from the dark intimation of the instruction required from the German friar, whose rivalry was of such importance as to create suspicion of murder being committed to remove it? In this respect, however, it must be remarked that the work was originally printed in 1564 and that Dee died in 1607. Now Kelly, having been his contemporary, may, it is hoped in charity, be relieved from the cruel accusation of having possibly poisoned this anonymous friar, although “ he did not live long after 1673.” Aspersions should not be lightly entertained, much less disseminated against such illustrious men as these; and the friar’s life having been cut short, so that he did not survive the publication of this great work above 109 years, is not sufficiently conclusive to fix the crime on Kelly. It must be allowed that even William Lilly, though indisputable authority for what *was to happen*, may have been here mistaken about what *had passed*!

It is astonishing that all these incongruous circumstances did not suggest to Mr. Panizzi that there might be some inaccuracy in the impression which he had taken of the facts that were before him. He possibly may not be very familiar with the exact chronology of our English writers, or it may have escaped his recollection, that Dee was admitted to the presence of Queen Elizabeth; but it is hard to conceive that an eye, accustomed to typography, should not have been struck by the difference in the *printing*, as it was executed in 1564 and in 1664. Yet the copy of *Monas Hieroglyphica*, belonging to the Royal Society, is of the former date, and not of 1664, as erroneously stated by Mr. Panizzi, both in his pamphlet and in the Catalogue. If he had paid attention to this, he probably would have avoided a more serious mistake; for it is not said in the book that the friar “ did not live long after 1673,” but that he “ did

“ not live long after.—1673 :” there being a full stop at the word “ after,” and the date being written something below the text and separated from it by a stroke of the pen, in a way which cannot be imitated in common printing, but which plainly indicates that the time refers, not to the circumstance which is mentioned, but to the writing of the note which records it. This removes the anachronisms which Mr. Panizzi’s version betrays ; but the memorandum, even in this state, cannot be of the slightest value for any useful purpose.

It may now be fairly judged whether the Committee “ ought to “ have been thankful that Mr. Panizzi had taken the trouble of introducing such comments and notes ;” or whether they did not act with more sound discretion in directing them to be omitted from the Catalogue. Mr. Panizzi states, in his Letter to the Duke of Sussex, (p. 30,) that he was even, when writing it, “ not aware of “ ever having expressed any opinion [in his notes] but what was “ strictly and properly necessary in compiling a *good* catalogue,” and to make the assertion more emphatic, he prints *good* in italics. He exclaims also, (p. 31,) with an apparent air of triumph, “ Will “ any one contend that a catalogue is better without the information contained in these notes than with it ?” He says likewise (p. 32,) that he was in expectation of “ some credit ” from them. There was no chance, therefore, but of a fruitless contest from any attempt to modify or correct what he so highly prized. He thinks, indeed, that he detects an inconsistency in the Committee by their rejection of his note on Malezieu, (above mentioned) after it had passed without any objection in the *Specimen* of his method for conducting the Catalogue. But it may be answered, that such a specimen did not call for the critical examination of details, which indeed might be assumed to be accurate, till the time arrived for a complete revisal of the whole. The note, likewise, in question, even if not open to the remarks which have now been made on it, could not be exempted from the general rule which the Committee had found it necessary to adopt.

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